

# Occupations of Jamestown

Using the list of the first settlers to arrive at Jamestown in 1607, create a bar graph to show the number of people who had each occupation. After you have completed your graph, consider the following questions:

- What does the graph tell you about what was important to the Virginia Company?
- Do you think they chose a good balance of the types of people they sent? Why or why not?
- How might the variety of occupations of the settlers affect the colony?
- Why do you think there weren't any women? What do you think women's roles were in the early 1600s? How might the decision not to send women affect the colony?
- Which jobs do you think were the most important and why?
- Are there any jobs for establishing a new settlement that aren't included that you think should have been? Why or why not?

## **Council**

--person chosen by the king to advise and assist in the governing the colony.

## **Preacher**

--person responsible for the spiritual health of the colony. He conducted services and performed religious rites for settlers.

## **Gentleman**

--a man of the upper-middle class (below the royal family, titled and lesser nobility) who was entitled to display arms (that is, had been granted a heraldic shield by the College of Heralds). The gentlemen settlers were all men who could afford and bought shares in the Virginia Company while still in London. A gentleman might hire laborers to work for him or pay the passage of others in hopes of building an estate in the New World.

## **Carpenter**

--craftsman who built furniture, tools, farm implements, wagons, and houses. The carpenter also took care of the wooden hull of a ship and repaired damage. The carpenter's skills were crucial because the primary route for transportation in the colony was by water.

## **Drummer**

--drums served as signal instruments for the infantry, relaying the commander's orders to soldiers in camp and on the field of battle. The steady rhythm and spirited tunes of the fifers and drummers kept the soldier's mind off the tedious march.

## **Blacksmith**

--fashioned iron tools for farming and building in a hot forge.

## **Sailor**

--knew workings of ship and had navigational skills. Sailors were important to the Jamestown settlement even after they arrived because the major form of transportation was still by water up and down the James river.

## **Barber**

--not only trimmed beards and hair but performed or assisted surgeries and dental operations.

**Bricklayer**

--craftsman who made and arranged bricks for buildings.

**Mason**

--a builder and worker in stone; cut stone to fit buildings.

**Tailor**

--made clothes from cloth material and leather for gentlemen of fashion.

**Laborer**

--worked to grow whatever their gentleman masters wanted, generally corn or tobacco; worked building houses and other essential tasks.

**Fueller**

--person who supplied wood for fires. Wood was the major fuel source in the colony and was burned for heat, light, cooking, forging, and probably defense.

**Refiner**

--(probably) person who refined gold. The refiner would take gold in its rough natural state, remove any rocks or other debris, and mold it into a pure form. The Virginia Company thought they would find gold in the New World because the Spaniards had found it there. But there was no gold to be found in Virginia, so the Jamestown refiner would not have been very busy!

**Gunner**

--an officer under the Crown, responsible for artillery and ammunition.

**Apothecary**

--person who kept a store or shop of non-perishable items like spices, drugs, preserved fruits and vegetables. Apothecaries were like pharmacists because they make powders, syrups, tinctures, and pills to medicate illness or prevent it.

**Surgeon**

--medical man, often on a ship, who practiced healing by manual operation. Surgeons treated wounds, fractures, deformities, disorders through surgery.

**Cooper**

--craftsman who made and repaired wooden vessels of storage such as casks, buckets, tubs, and barrels. Coopers made barrels to store a variety of foodstuffs, water, wine, and other goods as well. The cooper's task was a difficult art which is passed down from master to apprentice.

**Tobacco-Pipe-maker**

--artisan who made pipes for the smoking of tobacco.

**Tradesman**

--person who went into the interior of the colony to trade British items for Indian furs and goods, often food. For many years, Jamestown survived solely on the food Indians gave or traded with them.

All jobs adapted from: [http://www2.vcdh.virginia.edu/teaching/jamestown/jobs\\_1.html](http://www2.vcdh.virginia.edu/teaching/jamestown/jobs_1.html) except the Drummer.

Drummer text from <http://www.history.org/history/fife&drum/instruments.cfm>